STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Re. incident in Kadi Town, District Mehasana, Gujarat on 12-5-1995

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI S. B. CHAVAN): Madam, I beg to lay on the Table a statement regarding the incident in Kadi town of District Mehsana, Gujarat on 12-5-1995.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I request that the copies of the Statement should be distributed to all the Members.

SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI (Madhya Pradesh): Madam, since we are not seeking clarifications, let the hon. Leader of the House tell us the salient features of the Statement.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That is not done as a back-door entry.

SHRI S. B. CHAVAN: Madam, there is only thing which I would like to mention specially. As was requested by one or two hon. Members that the Leader of the Opposition, the Chief Minister of Gujarat and I should meet and discuss among ourselves and thereafter make a statement, we had this kind of a discussion yesterday. The hon. Chief Minister was gracious enough to come and we exchanged our views and he agreed for a sitting Judge to make an inquiry into every thing. This is the only thing that I thought I must tell the House.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now I can relieve the Minister of his trouble. We will take up the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Bill, 1995. Shri P. A. Sangma.

SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Is he out of labour?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No. He was very much in the Labour Ministry. I don't want him to be out of labour.

THE MATERNITY BENEFIT (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1995

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): Madam, I beg to move:

"That the Bill further to amend the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, be taken into consideration."

Madam, as the hon. Members are aware, the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 regulates the employment of women in certain establishments before and after child birth and provides for maternity and certain other benefits, the Act applies, in the first instance, to factories, mines, plantations, shops or establishments and the circus industry. It can be extended to other establishments by the State Governments. There is no wage limit for coverage under the Act.

Under the Act, women employees are entitled to maternity benefit at the rate of average daily wages for the period of their actual absence up to 12 weeks due to delivery. In cases of illness arising due to pregnancy, etc., they are entitled to additional leave with wages for a period of one month.

They are also entitled to get six weeks' maternity benefit in case of miscarriage. The Act also makes certain provisions to safeguard the interests of pregnant women workers.

[The Vice-Chairman (Shri Md. Salim in the Chair.]

The Act was last amended in 1988. In order to motivate and also to facilitate women employees to undertake family welfare measures, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare had made certain recommendations for amendment of the Act. Keeping their recommendations in view, it is proposed to carry out certain amendments so as to provide the following additional benefits to women employees:—

(i) Grant of six weeks' leave with wages in the case of medical termination of pregnancy.

(ii) Grant of two weeks' leave with wages to women employees who undergo tubectomy operation.

(iii) Grant of leave with wages for a maximum period of one month in the case of illness arising out of MTP or tubectomy.